



Photo by Richard Walker

Harry Hasegawa at the popular Hasegawa's General Store in Hana.

## Hasegawa: Development is inevitable

*Famous store's owner says, for lack of a better idea, a golf course could be good for the community's economic health.*

Although Maui's Hana coastline is known for its beautiful scenery and famous residents, probably one of the most venerable landmarks is the Hasegawa General Store.

Of course, Harry Hasegawa won't admit that the store his grandfather and uncle established in 1910 is anything more than just a country store. But Hasegawa's boasts its own song, written by Paul Weston and made famous in the early '60s on the nationally broadcast "Hawaii Calls" radio show.

Over the years, the Hasegawas have learned to roll with the punches — the sharp loss of their clientele when the sugar plantation shut down, and a devastating fire almost four years ago. But, always the businessman, Harry Hasegawa has managed to do what's best for the store.

Today, with the slowdown in tourism and with the Hotel Hana-Maui operating deeply in the red, Hasegawa is one of many walking a fine line between a desire for jobs and housing and the concern for the serenity and timelessness of Hana.

For the lack of other ideas, a hotel golf course sounds like a good idea, Hasegawa said. He feels change is inevitable, and maybe even favorable, if it will reap greater benefits for the economic stability of the community.

Hasegawa said some suggested alternatives, such as expanding Hana's agriculture industry, would not be as viable.

"I'd like to see it have a little bit more commerce, but not enough so that we become like Lahaina or Kahului or Kihui," Hasegawa said. "I'm for slow growth; I'm for a stabilized economy here."

Hasegawa understands the community's

concern over broken promises from these big companies that have come to Hana to run the hotel, but accepts it as a part of business.

"They had a lot of visions, but a Realtor told me that the value of the place is here, and these people (the hotel owners) can make a lot of mistakes and still be all right," Hasegawa said.

The cultural and social makeup of the Hana coast is also at stake. Currently, about 48 percent of the population is of native Hawaiian ancestry, and many of them would like to preserve "the last Hawaiian place."

Shoichi and Saburo Hasegawa, immigrants from Hiroshima, Japan, in the early 1900s, opened the store after their two-year contracts as sugar laborers ran out. Harry's son Neil is the fourth generation of Hasegawas to run the store.

For almost half a century, Hana relied on sugar cane as the mainstay of its economy. Hundreds of immigrants lived in various camps when Hana was a thriving plantation community.

Every day after school, Hasegawa and his friends would sit on the stone wall outside the Hana Hongwanji Mission and wait for the cane-hauling truck so they could snatch stalks to chew on.

But everything changed in 1948, when the Hana mill closed and the acres of sugar cane became open, grassy fields as Hana turned to ranching.

Some of those resistant to change don't want to see Hana overrun by newcomers.

"You're right about the changing faces," Hasegawa replied. "But if long-time residents didn't have a job here and had to move away, wouldn't that change the faces, too?"

*By Kim Murakawa, a journalism student at the University of Hawaii-Manoa. Research for this article was made possible by a grant provided by the Reader's Digest Foundation and administered by the UH Department of Journalism.*

*trash. He also formed the Diamond Head Climbers' Hul, encouraging residents and visitors alike to trek to the top and gather litter along the way."*

Submitted by  
Caroline Witherspoon,  
Honolulu

### Do not disturb

*"We should put up a sign in places where tourists go that says, 'Please don't disturb the fish!' Maybe they should limit the amount of food that is fed to the fish."*

Nickey Machado,  
4th grade,  
Lincoln School